



ENTERPRISE

Eager market for baby carrier

TORONTO (UPC) — Two Toronto women who launched their own business using "house-keeping money" have discovered there's an eager market for their version of the centuries-old baby carrier for modern parents.

Edda Goldman and Roni Bregman, friends since their children attended nursery school seven years ago, launched Kidpower Unlimited Inc., in April 1983.

Just a year later their first major product, the Baby Matey baby carrier, has hit the market and is now available at most major Eaton department stores or by mail order from their firm.

"We can't take the praise for inventing the baby carrier," says Goldman, "because baby holders date back to the 12th century B.C. when Chinese women used cloth holders to carry their children around their bodies."

Goldman, a mother

of three, and Bregman, who has two young daughters, say they began exploring the idea of a new baby carrier out of dissatisfaction with existing ones on the market.

"We both used a lot of baby carriers when our kids were young. Everyone who has had a baby has probably owned at least one carrier," says Goldman.

Most carriers, she notes, are "bags" in which the baby sits, supported by straps around the wearer's shoulders.

"That leads to a lot of stooped shoulders and we have found that you couldn't carry an infant very comfortably for very long," said Bregman, who used six different baby carriers while her children were infants.

Their Baby Matey, however looks like a cloth insect with six straps. Two go around the waist while others fasten over the shoulders and cross the back.

They are secured with small metal rings rather than the usual snaps.

The two women say with their model the baby's weight is more evenly distributed, making the carrier more comfortable to use.

Because it has no metal frame, the cotton denim carrier is lightweight and can be folded and carried in a purse.

Goldman says she and her partner began at first by "just buying supplies, taking money out of our housekeeping." But two years ago Bregman and her husband sold their home, and with Goldman, put \$20,000 into the enterprise.

"Now we have some credibility," says Goldman.

They employ three full-time sewers and expect to hire two more soon. Five others work part-time. So far they've made more than 4,000 carriers.

Skylar Hill-Jackson

has used the carrier since the birth of her son eight months ago. She taught her daily exercise classes up until the day she gave birth.

"For the first week after he was born I taught the class with him in his Baby Matey," she says.

"He got so used to the aerobic movements from the class that he had a hard time settling down when I put him down to sleep."

The carrier can be adapted in order to carry babies up to three years old in four positions — on the front, side, back or as a nursing sling.

It sells for \$35.95, while a deluxe model, with a detachable infant head rest and a front pocket to carry diapers or toys, costs \$42.95.



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